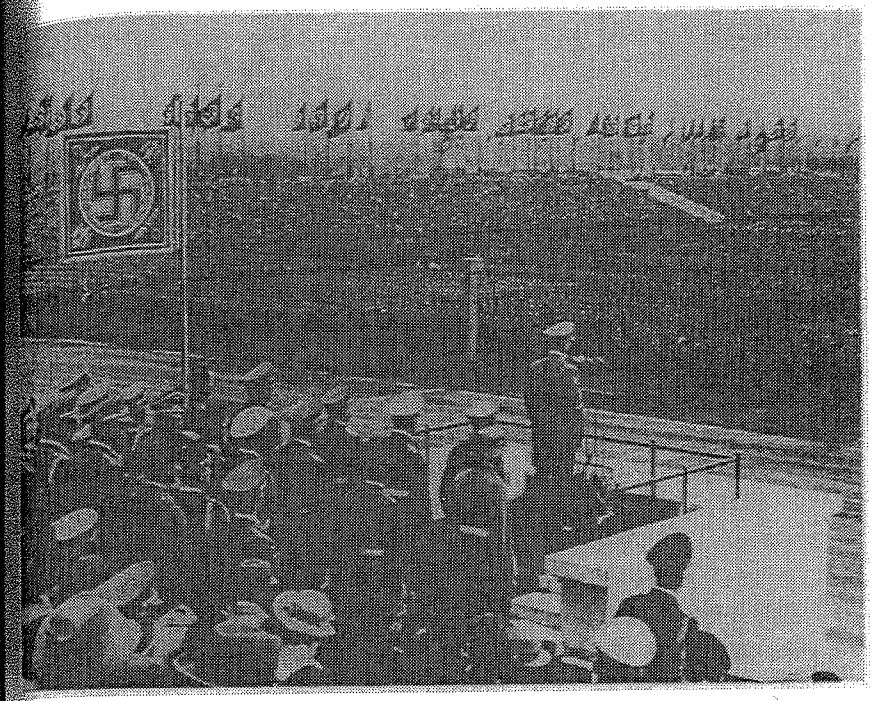
that underlay and informed these impulses. The British Empire may (or may not) have been the highest stage of capitalism. But it was certainly the highest stage of hierarchy.[20]

This was partly because hierarchy offered a cogent and appealing vision of imperial society and also therefore of imperial purpose. For as Stephen Howe has argued, the British Empire was, in its government and its administration, characterized by 'a romantic, anti-capitalist ethos'.[21] In these endeavours, the significance of religion and duty (and the military) has long been recognized: of the Church of England and the public school (and the officers' mess).[22] But far less attention has been given to the sociological underpinnings and expressions of these sacred and secular (and military) impulses: the belief in the importance of preserving hierarchy as something that was God-given and pre-capitalist, and therefore the best of all possible worlds.[23] This was true of the imperial metropolis, where many of its ruling institutions were in their ethos and their ideology anti-capitalist and pro-hierarchy. And it was equally true in the empire: great estates and Gothic cathedrals in the dominions; ruling princes and Indo-Saracenic architecture in South Asia; native chiefs and traditional tribes in Africa and the Middle East; imperial chivalry, royal images and icons, everywhere. In all these ways, and by deliberate design rather than absence of mind, the British Empire in its heyday was very much an anti-capitalist and pro-hierarchical construction.

But it was also that the empire was not *just* as hierarchical a construction as British society in the metropolis: it was significantly *more* so, a kind of enlarged and heightened version of the metropolitan model, blooming with brighter colours, greater radiance and stronger perfume. So: viceroys and governors were treated with more fawning deference overseas than ever they received at home, where many of them missed the saluting and the curtseying they had taken for granted in their palmy proconsular days. So: district commissioners were responsible for larger areas of administration than most English country gentlemen would ever have known on their estates. So: imperial civil servants and colonial administrators lived in greater splendour and comfort overseas than they did when they returned, 'exiled from glory', to Eastbourne or Bedford.[24] So: middle-class emigrants to the dominions might hope



30. Nuremberg rally, 1938.

to establish themselves as 'somebody', as indigenous gentry, a status and a position to which they might never realistically have aspired at home. Small wonder, then, that many people who went out to the empire, as settlers or as administrators, or as proconsuls, sought to replicate Britain's social hierarchy overseas, on account of their *enhanced position within it*, rather than to overturn it.[25]

Viewed and evoked in this way, as an hierarchical construction, and as a 'traditional' enterprise, the British Empire must rank as one of modern history's most extraordinary creations, and it is only now that it is finally dead and gone that we can begin to grasp – if we are so inclined – the full extent and varied nature of its many extraordinarinesses. And among them must be counted its conservatively cultured settler dominions, its Indian Empire built around caste and village and prince and Raj, its African colonies and Middle Eastern mandates governed according to the theory of indirect rule, its honours system that was unrivalled in its inventiveness and Byzantine in its complexity, and its royal and imperial crown that intruded itself at every jubilee and on every pillar-box. Indeed, by the inter-war years, when the royal regimes and theatrical empires of Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary had disappeared, there was nothing left like it anywhere else in the western world. The splendid anachronism of its pageantry at the time of George V's Silver Jubilee and George VI's coronation was deliberately projected as a powerful and reassuring antidote to the high-tech parades and search-light rallies in Mussolini's Italy, Stalin's Red Square and Hitler's Nuremberg.[26]

It was, then, not only the imperial metropolis, but also the imperial periphery that may be described in George Orwell's famous phrase as 'the most class-ridden country under the sun'. As such, they were mutually reinforcing: on the one hand, the empire was built around notions of an exported domestic social hierarchy; on the other, empire served to reinforce from abroad the hierarchy of home. By the late nineteenth century the substance and semblance of the British Empire as an hierarchical empire had become increasingly important in bolstering the British perception that they still belonged to what was in the metropolis a traditional, agricultural, layered society.[27] In an era of

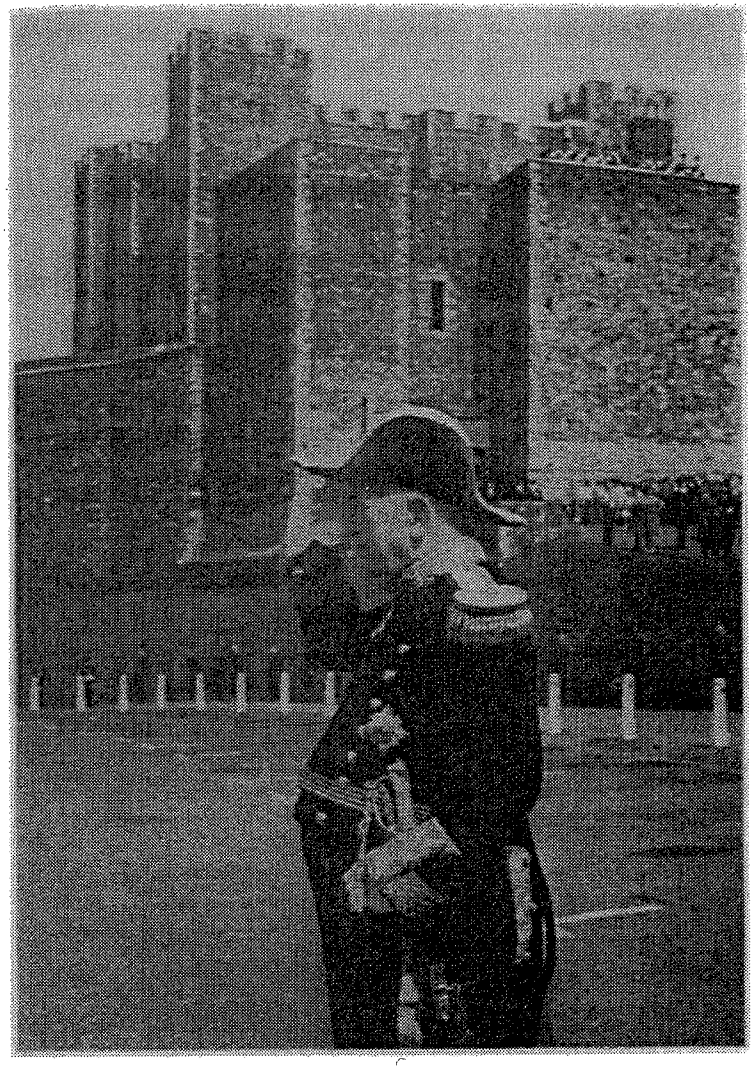
mass democracy, advanced industrialization, unprecedented urban growth and the beginnings of aristocratic decline, the elaborate layers and gradations of empire, which were underpinned by, and helped to underpin, the newly revived monarchy, served to persuade the British that they continued to inhabit an ordered society, and to persuade those plumed and plumaged proconsuls that even in the era of Lloyd George, the patricians remained at the top of the social hierarchy. In these ways, 'ideas about the ordering of Empire' continued to be closely connected to 'ideas about the ordering of Britain itself'.[28]

From these perspectives, the British Empire was about land and agriculture and the countryside, and about the ideal, divinely sanctioned social order to which this gave rise: a way of life, and a social structure, that still existed on the greater and lesser estates in Britain, but that was increasingly threatened; and a way of life that was better preserved (and being preserved) in the empire. As Sir Edwin Lutyens once noted with pleasure and recognition, going out into 'India, like Africa' made him feel 'very Tory and pre-Tory Feudal'. It was a shrewd observation – and it held good throughout the inter-war years when the presumption that even the dominions would remain preponderantly agricultural societies continued all but unquestioned.[29] Indeed, such conservative-rural sentiments were held at least down to the end of the Second World War, and in some cases even beyond. As late as 1950 the Tory Party could still proclaim itself the champion of a national and imperial community characterized by 'an infinity of gradation', which was essentially and primordially rural both at home and abroad. Historically, the Conservatives had always been 'associated with agricultural interests and the idea of empire' – interests and ideas that were both essentially hierarchical.[30]

All this was well displayed in two speeches delivered on Britain and the empire by Leopold Amery in 1943. He was well read, well educated and well travelled, a former colonial secretary in the Baldwin government of 1924 to 1929, and Churchill's secretary of state for India during the Second World War. Amery's Britain was an organic, evolving, traditional community, whose inhabitants were uninterested in mechanical forms or abstract doctrines, but preferred to trust to personal feelings and individual instincts. As such, it was a nation

renowned for its exemplary monarchy, its country houses and paternal landowners, and its matchlessly beautiful countryside, in which individual distinctions and inequalities of status were blended into the seamless fabric of life. Extended from here, Amery's empire was 'the translation into outward shape, and under ever varying circumstances, of the British character and of certain social and political principles, constituting a definite British culture or way of life which, first evolved on British soil, has since been carried by our people across all the seas'. Created by the 'compromising, conservative, adaptable' national character, the British Empire was identified by its unity and continuity that blended local variations and common patriotism, by its strong love of order and authority and its hostility to systematic schemes and logical conclusions, by its belief in compromise and toleration, by its common devotion to the king–emperor, and by its respect for tradition, antiquity, 'old substance' and 'old form'.[31]

Described (and praised) in this way, the wartime British Empire, over whose liquidation Winston Churchill had no intention of presiding, was still recognizably the same traditional, royal, layered, Burkeian organism that the American colonists had so vehemently rejected back in 1776, when they had set themselves against monarchy, titles, aristocracy and hierarchy by embracing the revolutionary principle that 'all men are created equal'. It was the same traditional, royal, layered Burkeian organism that Woodrow Wilson had rejected in the aftermath of the First World War, when he had eagerly joined in dismantling the Russian, the German and the Austro-Hungarian Empires, and had sought to create a civilization that was safe, not for British imperialism, but for western democracy. And despite his patrician upbringing, Harvard education, friendship with King George VI, and delight in being 'in the same decade' as Churchill, it was the same traditional, royal, layered, Burkeian organism that Franklin Roosevelt disliked so intensely. After all, the American colonists had rejected Britain's empire of hierarchy in the late eighteenth century: why, one hundred and fifty years later, was this reactionary undertaking still around?[32] Only during the early years of the Cold War, when the British Empire appeared a potentially useful ally in the battle against communism, were these hostile American perceptions briefly reversed.



31. Sir Robert Menzies installed as lord warden of the Cinque Ports, 1966.

Throughout most of its existence, the British Empire *was* on the side, both at home and overseas, of the established order. Small wonder, then, that its zenith coincided with the heyday of spectacular ceremonials, and with the hegemony of the Conservative Party. And small wonder that its heroes all had their place in the Tory pantheon. There was Benjamin Disraeli, who initiated the Order of St Michael and St George and the Order of the Indian Empire; who dispatched Lord Lorne to be governor-general of Canada and the prince of Wales to visit India; who made Queen Victoria empress of India; and who believed that 'it is only by the amplification of titles that you can often touch and satisfy the imagination of nations'.[33] There was Lord Curzon, who adored landed estates, old buildings, the feudal order and its ceremonial expression: 'who always seemed to live in spirit on the back of a highly caparisoned elephant'; who accumulated knighthoods and peerages with an insatiable appetite for chivalric aggrandizement; and who was more at ease with Indian princes than with the worthy bourgeoisie of Derby. And there was Winston Churchill, who loved the empire for its 'glitter, pomp and iced champagne', its 'high-sounding titles', its 'tradition, form and ceremony'; who devoted his political life to 'two public causes which I think stand supreme – the maintenance of the enduring greatness of Britain and her Empire, and the historical continuity of our island life'; and whose state funeral in 1965 would be the last, defining, valedictory imperial pageant.[34]

As such, the British Empire as an hierarchical enterprise was never merely the 'one-sided creation of British imagination'. It was never just one-sided, because many colonials, like Menzies (who eventually became a companion of honour, knight of the Thistle and lord warden of the Cinque Ports, and was rumoured to hanker after a peerage), believed in it, and were delighted to belong to it, to be involved in it and to be rewarded by it.[35] And the empire was never just imagination because there were abundant materials, both at home and overseas, out of which that picture was fashioned and constructed. As a result, most Britons saw their empire as an extension of their own social world rather than in contradistinction to it. They exported social perceptions on the presumption of sameness as much as they imported social

perceptions on the presumption of difference. They were as eager to make it seem familiar as they were to recognize that it was unfamiliar, to see it as a social hierarchy rather than as a racial hierarchy. Their empire existed overseas: but the British tried to make it seem like home. They saw what they were conditioned, what they wanted, and what they expected, to see.[36]

10

Limitations

This was a persuasive (and pervasive) picture of Britain and its empire, which needs to be recognized and retrieved. But it was also a partial (and partisan) picture, and that too needs to be recognized and retrieved. For in the attempt to create, unify and envision the British Empire as 'one vast interconnected world', which replicated and reinforced the domestic social order, there was – as in most fields of metropolitan control and peripheral collaboration, and as there had already been during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – a significant gulf between theory and practice, intention and accomplishment.[1] In reality, the empire was never as fully hierarchical or as convincingly homogenized as those Britons who governed it, collaborated in it and went along with it tried to make it, wished it to be or believed it to be. This in turn meant that in the imperial metropolis, there was always a view on the left (from Paine and Cobden to Morell and beyond) that the empire was a 'Tory racket': not so much an ordered, paternal, traditional organism, encompassing all levels of society, but a system of outdoor relief and exploitation for those at the top – the titled and the rich. These domestic critics tended to be urban, middle class and intellectual and, as the empire expanded and evolved, they were joined by colonials on the periphery, who tended to be from similar backgrounds and hold similar views.[2]

Even in the great dominions of settlement, and notwithstanding the best efforts of those who wished it otherwise, the British social hierarchy was neither fully nor successfully replicated. In nations with less developed and largely agricultural economies, the extremes

of wealth and poverty were not as great as in Britain, which meant that society was less unequal and less layered. As Walter Bagehot explained, the 'whole series of attempts to transplant to the colonies a graduated English society' had 'always failed at the first step', with 'the base of the pyramid spread abroad and the apex tumbled in and perished'.[3] Indeed, for many settlers, the entire point of emigrating was to get away from what they perceived as the suffocating hierarchy (and hierarchical attitudes) of the mother country, and to begin a new life where equality and opportunity were more important, as this had also been true in an earlier century of their colonial American forebears. From such a perspective, the *lack* of hierarchy in the colonies – known in Australia as 'mateship' – was a measure of *success*, not failure.[4] 'The overseas British,' John Darwin notes, 'generally had little sympathy for what they regarded as an over-rigid class system at home.' And when the overseas British were Irish, who were Catholic rather than Anglican, and Home Rulers rather than imperialists, they were even less likely to accept the imperial hierarchy, preferring (as in parts of Australia) to apply their domestic grievances to colonial agitation.[5]

Hence too the real opposition among many in the settlement dominions to those failed and faded sprigs of immigrant nobility: those 'gentlemen emigrants' and aristocratic 'remittance men', trying to live in absurdly extravagant and lordly and leisured style in the meritocratic colonies, on the basis of a regular but limited income from home, and who gave themselves airs and graces that impressed none and enraged many. They too were signs and symbols of the world that most settlers had thankfully left behind, and of which they did not wish to be reminded. Hence too the disapproval of the excessively expensive proconsular paraphernalia of Government House, with its petty snobberies, its 'sham' courts, its obsession with precedence, and all the toadying and title-hunting sycophants who sought invitations to go there.[6] Hence, finally, the criticism of the office of the governor-general itself as being no more than 'a glittering and gaudy toy', and of those who held it as the 'party dumpings of Britain', the 'imported pooh-bahs', the 'untried juvenile noblemen' and the 'aristocratic fainéants' with whom the dominions were all too often fobbed off as

governors-general, such as Buxton in South Africa, Bessborough in Canada, Bledisloe in New Zealand and Dudley in Australia.[7]

It was the same in India, where the hierarchical nature of the imperial embrace was less complete and less convincing than its supporters and beneficiaries claimed. In part this was because, despite their efforts and inquiries, the British were very ignorant of India and Indian society.[8] Caste was an exceptionally complex thing, which meant both more and less to South Asians than it did to the Raj. The relationship between the hierarchy of caste and the hierarchy of the princes was particularly problematic, and many Britons did not understand that they did not understand it, among them King Edward VII, who mistakenly (but revealingly) supposed that nawabs and rajas were of purer caste than Brahmans.[9] Moreover, many of the princes were regarded, not as the upholders of traditional society and values, but as idle, profligate, rapacious, degenerate, authoritarian and corrupt, and even well-disposed viceroys like Curzon felt obliged to intervene to mitigate the most severe abuses. As for the Raj itself: the British believed that its hierarchy, pageantry and splendour guaranteed its appeal to the native imagination across the length and breadth of India. At all three imperial durbars, this was offered as the justification for the scale and the cost of the proceedings; but there seems little evidence that the majority of the population were much interested in, or lastingly influenced by, these displays. By the Second World War this viceregal splendour was seen as the 'laboured continuance, apparently for reasons of prestige, of opulence that seemed unrelished'. Few Indians, Philip Woodruff recalled, 'were stirred by the pomp of Empire'.[10]

This British preoccupation with 'traditional' India – with village, caste, landowner and princely state – was not only based on mistaken perceptions and misleading analogies. It also encouraged them to ignore, or wish away, or disregard, the alternative India that was coming into being: urban, educated, modernizing, radical, middle class and nationalist, which was especially to be found in Calcutta and after 1885 in the Congress Party.[11] One reason Congress hated the Raj was because its intrusive imperialism took the form of reverence for tradition and hierarchy. How ironic, Nehru observed, in a formulation that has been regularly repeated ever since, that the representatives of

the dynamic, progressive west should ally themselves with the most conservative and oppressive elements of the static, backward east. But the British responded by dismissing these 'infernal Baboos' as 'unrepresentative extremists', as Leninist intellectuals in thrall to the masses and incorrigibly hostile to the established order.[12] Throughout its existence, the Raj preferred tradition to modernity, hierarchy to democracy, as exemplified in Lord Lytton's remark to the queen–empress at the time of the 1877 durbar that 'if we have with us the princes, we shall have with us the people'. And the same view underlay the decision taken in 1911, to move the capital 'from the premier city of politics and business, Calcutta, to Delhi, the noncommercial, nonpolitical centre of ancient Imperial splendour'.[13]

There were similar illusions regarding the colonial empire, where the tribal and chiefly world of indirect rule, with its ordered hierarchies and venerable structures, was often based, as Andrew Porter has observed, 'on skewed or imperfect knowledge of local societies'. For the British knew very little, either historically or anthropologically, about the regions that they annexed. And (as in India) the analogies they drew between native tribes and country estates, and between native chiefs and country gentlemen, were often wildly misleading: 'self-deceptions and half-truths', as John Tosh has rightly called them.[14] Lugard might have had some success in Northern Nigeria, where the emirs presided over their authoritarian regimes. But the south and west were (unknown to Lugard) stateless, decentralized, small-scale societies, without emirs or hierarchy, and his attempt to create 'warrant chiefs' gave great offence in societies with no tradition of chieftainship.[15] In the Sudan, indirect rule worked with some success in the south, but not in the north, where once again the chiefs in whom the British had reposed their confidence turned out to have less authority than they had thought.[16] And in Tanganyika, Sir Donald Cameron's attempt to discover (and rule through) 'authentic', 'traditional', pre-German conquest tribes and chiefs was an equally ignorant and ill-fated enterprise, for 'many east Africans had no chiefs, let alone kings'.[17]

This mistaken belief that hierarchy was always unchangingly *there* led to further limitations of indirect rule. As in India, the British preference for agriculture over industry, for the country over the town,

for tradition rather than change, and for individuals over collective groups, meant there was a general dislike of the progressive, city-dwelling middle classes. In 1873 Lord Kimberley thought it better in West Africa to 'have nothing to do with the "educated natives" as a body. I would treat with the hereditary chiefs only.' This remained British policy thereafter, which meant that towns like Khartoum, Lagos and Nairobi were increasingly outside the British imperial mind-set. Yet this was where change was most rapid and irreversible, and where nationalist politics and hostility to empire and hierarchy would one day blossom. As one administrator in the Sudan put it, in unintended corroboration of Nehru, 'The chiefs represent the Past. The educated classes represent the Present.' To disregard this was to 'make a fetish of tradition' – an analysis that may be taken to apply to much of the British Empire in its heyday. That was certainly the progressive opinion in the section of the Colonial Office concerned with the administration of Malaya. 'From the democratic point of view,' noted Dr T. D. Shiels in 1931, 'it would be a retrograde step to enhance the position of the Rulers.'[18] Indeed, by then administrators and politicians were more widely criticizing the whole idea of indirect rule as anachronistic, undemocratic and too resistant to change.[19]

With appropriate local variations, the same limitations of perceptions and of policy characterized Britain's cultivation (and creation) of royal regimes in the Middle East. They may have been modelled on the princely states of India, and they may have been the expression of genuine imperial veneration for Arab hierarchies and Bedouin chiefs, but they lacked the stabilizing accoutrements of tradition and antiquity, and they were not well grounded in the affections of their subjects. There, as in Africa, the British were relying, out of necessity and out of ignorance, on partners whose powers and legitimacy did not always match their privileges or their pomp. In Egypt, 'the princes' and 'the pashas' were widely disliked as British stooges and puppets, and were seen as agents of empire rather than as beneficiaries of the people. The Hashemite rulers in Jordan and Iraq were equally vulnerable, since they owed their thrones entirely to the British and, as one official observed, they had 'never succeeded in establishing themselves firmly in the hearts of the people'.[20] Indeed, according to Elie Kedourie, Iraq

was little more than a 'make-believe kingdom, built on false premises', a 'hotbed of corrupt and greedy reactionaries', where the king lacked the support of the Kurds, the Jewish population, the Shi'ite tribes and the Baghdad middle class.[21]

Inevitably, this meant that the British were seen by a majority of the population as the allies of 'vested interests' (as in India and the colonies), which increasingly came to mean 'being regarded as an obstacle in the way of beneficial change'.[22] And they were resented for it. Change in the inter-war Middle East had an Indian rather than an African dynamic: westernization, modernization, urbanization and education were rapidly bringing into being, in Alexandria, Cairo, Baghdad and Amman, a literate, politicized, nationalist middle class. From their oppositional perspective, the British Empire appeared 'a true ally of reaction . . . depending as it did upon the alliance of sheikhs and princes, distrustful of urban values and intellectual taste'.[23] The Second World War, which witnessed an unprecedented British military presence from the Suez Canal to the Persian Gulf, intensified these nationalist feelings into something that Sir Orme Sargent feared 'the ruling classes [could] no longer control'. He was not alone in this opinion. 'I do not believe,' Ernest Bevin remarked in 1946, 'that the Pashas will maintain for ever undisputed sway over Egypt.' 'Nationalism has come to stay' agreed one Foreign Office hand in Iraq two years later. But, he went on, 'the Regent is not the man to lead it'.[24] From this unsettling perspective, Britain's continued attachment to the Middle Eastern monarchies and the 'old gang' was more a sign of imperial weakness than of colonial cunning.[25]

Such were the local limitations on the hierarchical structures and sentiments of empire. There were also more general constraints, inadequacies and incompleteness that limited the reach and effectiveness of impulses emanating from the metropolis. In part this was because the social conservatism that was characteristic of the empire did not necessarily translate into political acquiescence. Dominion leaders might hanker after imperial titles and honours, and revere the royal family, but that did not prevent them from asserting their nations' independence and autonomy, thereby undermining the 'organic unity'

of the empire. Before the First World War they had roundly rejected imperial federation, and during the 1920s and 1930s both General Smuts in South Africa and W. T. Cosgrave in the Irish Free State were ardent campaigners for recognition – ultimately embodied in the Statute of Westminster in 1931 – that the dominions were 'free and equal' to Britain.[26] And even so fervent a believer in Britain and in hierarchy as Robert Menzies would play the nationalist hand when it suited him. He was prepared to try to topple Churchill in the darkest days of 1941; he was a jealous defender of prime ministerial power even from the British governors-general he brought to Australia with such relish; and in signing the Anzus treaty (which involved the United States and New Zealand, but kept the United Kingdom out), he recognized the need to move his country away from the traditional British connection towards closer ties with America.[27]

It was the same in 'traditional' India, where collaboration between the Raj and the maharajas was rarely as cordial or as complete as was suggested by the cosy image of princes and proconsuls sharing equal membership of imperial orders of chivalry. Despite their public acquiescence in this post-Disraelian extravaganza, some rulers inwardly (and sometimes outwardly) rejected this whole enterprise as false and demeaning. Although they enjoyed a deserved reputation as model and loyal princes, the maharajas of Jaipur were silently protesting collaborators, who used Indo-Saracenic architecture for public buildings, but rejected it for their private palaces as smacking too much of complicity in British domination. Less subtly, the maharaja Sayajirao III of Baroda, who was second in rank among all the ruling princes after the nizam of Hyderabad and had been a GCSI since the days of Lord Dufferin, publicly snubbed the king–emperor at the 1911 durbar by doing homage insolently rather than obsequiously. Thereafter he was viewed by the British (with good cause) as a seditious nationalist.[28] According to Mahatma Gandhi, many princes resented being compelled to dress up, to wear stars and sashes, and to perform like circus animals in pantomimes of colonial devising – a mood of princely alienation that helps to explain their refusal to accede to the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935 (well captured by Gita Mehta in her novel *Raj*).[29]

A similar picture emerges in the colonial empire, where collaborating emirs, sultans and notables could assert their own authority and defy the empire in the same manner as dominion leaders or Indian princes. Before the First World War the British presence in tropical Africa was generally weak and dispersed, which enabled ambitious native chiefs, like Chilongozi Gondwe of the Tumbuka, to enhance their position by using the title 'king', even when the local district commissioner disapproved. By the inter-war years the imperial presence was stronger and more systematic, but with that there came a growing yet reluctant recognition that, in places like the Sokoto Province of Nigeria, the most successful African chiefs – those with popular legitimacy, selected by the tribal kingmakers rather than the British administrators, who were relied upon for 'good native administration' – could also be the most difficult and independent-minded.[30] It was the same in Malaya where, in the early 1930s, the new high commissioner, Sir Cecil Clementi, sought to bring the sultans' states into closer association; but the rulers opposed the scheme so vehemently that it was eventually abandoned. And as the first stirrings of African nationalism began, royal visits and ceremonial events were increasingly manipulated by educated and 'progressive' Africans, so that within an ostensibly obsequious pattern of behaviour, opposition to empire was expressed. This was true of the visits of the prince of Wales and King George VI to Northern Rhodesia in 1925 and 1947; and by 1953 the country's Congress Party was openly boycotting Queen Elizabeth II's coronation festivities.[31]

But it was in the Middle East, where the new monarchies were insecurely grounded, and where the sovereigns needed to distance themselves from the British if they were to have any hope of conciliating the nationalists, that relations were the most difficult. Throughout the 1920s King Faisal of Iraq was the despair of British high commissioners: he was weak, devious, indecisive and unreliable, and he often sided with anti-British groups against the empire. His successor, King Ghazi, was another figure of 'total irresponsibility': he ran a broadcasting station from his palace that attacked the British, he flirted with Hitler, and laid claim to Kuwait.[32] It was no better in Egypt, where the pasha-dominated governments refused to sign a treaty with the Empire

between 1922 and 1936, and where King Farouk made no secret of his pro-Axis sympathies. He was, according to Churchill, 'a poor friend of England'. During the Second World War the British were obliged to intervene in Iraq to restore the Regent Abdulillah to his throne after he had been deposed in a pro-Nazi coup in 1941, and in Egypt in the following year, when they effectively coerced Farouk into supporting the Allied war effort. Unsurprisingly, matters did not improve thereafter. An attempted treaty with Egypt failed in 1946, when Farouk laid claim to the Sudan; and in 1948 a new treaty negotiated by the Foreign Office and Iraq was repudiated by the regent because of popular nationalist pressure.[33]

All of which is simply to say that the British Empire as a social structure and hierarchical vision was not always in accord with the realities of imperial power politics; and so it was hardly surprising that the two greatest unifying forces of imperial hierarchy were also less effective than their most ardent supporters would have wished. For all its range, reach and inclusive inventiveness, the system of imperial honours never fully succeeded in unifying and ordering imperial society across the oceans and around the world. In the more egalitarian dominions of settlement, they were only ever embraced by a minority, and they never gained the prestige or resonance they were thought to have in Britain.[34] Back in the 1840s Governor Sir Charles Metcalfe had observed that the 'democratic or anti-British spirit' in parts of Canada meant people would 'strive to turn such honours into ridicule' and this prediction was often well borne out. 'Making titles,' Frederick Elliot agreed, 'does not make aristocracies. It is vain to give hereditary titles where fortunes are ephemeral.' The schemes for separate colonial peerages in Canada and Australia (and for hereditary upper houses in the colonial legislatures) never materialized: they were generally unpopular, and there were few people who would have been eligible. Few 'British' peerages were ever awarded to colonials, and some, such as Beaverbrook's, were very controversial.[35]

In any case, as the dominions became more conscious of their own nationalities, they became less eager to accept honours emanating from London, especially peerages. This was partly because they did not want to remain in this subservient imperial embrace, and partly because

(*pace* Trollope) they believed their egalitarian ethos was against titles, especially hereditary ones. Accordingly, in 1919 Canada presented an address to the crown, asking that the king 'refrain hereafter from conferring any title of honour or titular distinction on any of your subjects domiciled or ordinarily resident in Canada'. It was because of this provision that the award of the Garter to the Anglophile and royalty-adoring Vincent Massey in the 1950s was vetoed (he was later consoled by Queen Elizabeth II with the non-title-conferring Royal Victorian Chain) and the proposed British life peerage for Conrad Black was recently opposed. South Africa adopted a similar practice in 1925. Although there was no official expression of disapproval from inter-war Australia, the Labour governments there simply stopped making any recommendations to London.[36] Elsewhere in the empire, the honours system was less contentious: but there were certainly some Indian princes who looked down on them as empty baubles; and, like any such system, it gave rise to envy and resentment as well as delight.

In such a climate, even the imperial monarchy legitimated hierarchy less effectively in the empire than it did in Britain. Notwithstanding the ubiquitous signs and symbols and signifiers of sovereignty, many Africans, South Asians, French Canadians and Afrikaners were, as Terence Ranger has rightly observed, simply not interested in British royalty.[37] Developing nationalist sentiments combined with more egalitarian impulses meant that in the melting-pot matrix of competing identities, the British imperial monarchy was not universally revered. In Australia, Irish-Catholics and radical labour did not buy into the hierarchical festival and kingly incorporation of Empire Day: they preferred St Patrick's Day, and after the First World War, Anzac Day became more popular.[38] In South Africa the Afrikaner nationalists remained more loyal to their own nationalist saints and heroes than to the Union or empire: the Great Trek meant more to them than Empire Day. Under these circumstances, royal proconsuls could be liabilities as well as assets, and they often had to tread more delicately than they knew how. The duke of Connaught's arrival in Canada met with an 'undercurrent of criticism' based on fears of too rigid a court at Rideau Hall; the appointment of Lord Athlone to South Africa was dismissed as 'an expensive survival of old and threadbare customs'; and the duke

of Gloucester's term in Australia was cut short after two years, when he was replaced by W. J. McKell, at that time the Labour premier of New South Wales.[39]

In the same way, the royal tours to the empire were reported in Britain as triumphant progresses, evoking effusive displays of loyalty and devotion; but the reality was not always thus. In Australia a demented Irishman tried to assassinate the duke of Edinburgh during his visit in 1868; and when the duke of York toured in 1901, there were criticisms of 'the polluting finger marks of old-world royalty' and of 'bowing to crests and monograms . . . baubles and titles and . . . all such humbug and flummery', with the whole thing written off as 'anti-Australian, caste-perpetuating and toadstool-germinating'.[40] In India the duke of Connaught disliked being 'agitated against' by Gandhi and the Congress, and the future Edward VIII failed to win over the nationalists: 'I must tell you at once,' he wrote to his father, 'that I'm very depressed about my work in British India as I don't feel that I am doing a scrap of good; in fact I can say that I know I am not.' Thereafter, the situation deteriorated still further, so that the planning of the durbar that should have been for Edward VIII, and was subsequently intended for George VI, was abandoned.[41] In South Africa two royal governors-general had failed to stem the rising tide of Afrikaner nationalism, and the royal tour of 1947 was no more successful, with hostile reactions from the Nationalist Party and their supporters in the press. Even Queen Elizabeth II's tour of Australia in 1953/4 was sceptically greeted by radicals who thought it was all an upper-class racket, and by Catholic-Irish-Australians who found Menzies's snobbish sycophancy nauseating.[42]

In any case, by this time the position of the crown vis-à-vis the dominions had been fundamentally altered, and this carried deeply subversive implications for the idea that the British sovereign was at the apex of a single, all-embracing imperial hierarchy. In 1926 the Balfour 'Definition' recognized that the dominions were 'autonomous communities', no longer in any way subservient to Britain, but equal in all respects to it and 'united by a common allegiance to the crown', wording later embodied in the Statute of Westminster of 1931.[43] One consequence of this was the creation of the new concept of the 'divisible

crown', with the king as separate sovereign of each of his dominions. This in turn implied (but they were implications that only the Irish Free State and South Africa at the time wished to make explicit) that the unitary British imperial monarchy was over, and with it the unitary imperial hierarchy of which the monarch was the apex and legitimator.[44] Another was that dominion governors-general, as the monarch's overseas representative, had their powers substantially reduced, and were now chosen by the king on the advice of the dominion government, rather than on that of the British prime minister. Hence the appointment of Sir Isaac Isaacs in Australia in 1931, an Australian and a Jew, and of the native-born Sir Patrick Duncan in South Africa in 1937, both portents that the days of integrated imperial hierarchy, as embodied in royal and aristocratic proconsuls, were numbered.[45]

As these qualifications and caveats suggest, there was a substantial element of ignorance, self-deception and make-believe in this hierarchical vision of the British Empire. This, in turn, meant the ornamental spectaculars that were famously and globally associated with it did not carry conviction everywhere. For some people the whole attempt to make empire and monarchy seem transcendently splendid was just a sham, which meant that there was conflict as well as consensus on these ceremonial occasions. So, when Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, there may have been widespread imperial rapture, but the Irish protested vigorously and publicly that they had been starved to death, and that was all the record of her sixty years had to show.[46] In India the nationalists expressed their disdain for the Raj by appropriating its rituals for their own purposes, so that their Congress leaders might be placed 'on an equal plane with those of the imperial hierarchy'.[47] In Britain, Keir Hardie thought all this monarchy, empire and flummery absurd, and (along with the *Manchester Guardian*) supported the maharajah of Gwalior in the correspondence columns of *The Times* in 1911.[48] There was the 'Dreadnought Hoax' in February 1910 when, with five friends, including Duncan Grant and Horace de Vere Cole, Virginia Woolf paid an official visit to the flagship of the British Home Fleet, with the emperor of Abyssinia impersonated by Anthony Buxton. In Britain, as in many parts of the empire, the urban,

middle-class intellectuals disliked spectacle as much as the empire it exaggeratedly celebrated. Like Woolf, they resented what Quentin Bell called the 'gold-laced masculine pomposity' of it all.[49]

This make-believe and illusion of the ornamental empire went deeper than that. For its essentially conservative imperial culture, stressing tradition and continuity, was in many ways very new and very innovative. The supposedly settled hierarchies of the great dominions, with ancestries stretching back to before the Conqueror, were recent creations, and *Burke's Colonial Gentry* was full of inconsistencies, inventions and mistakes.[50] The apparently 'timeless' India of caste and villages and ruling princes, with their 'traditional' Indo-Saracenic palaces, was not only a partial vision in that it ignored the towns, the middle classes and the nationalists; it also mistakenly assumed that these three pillars of 'timeless' India were unchanging, when in reality they were changing a great deal between the Mutiny and independence.[51] In the same way, the Malayan sultans whom the British cultivated were very different sorts of sovereign from those that had existed before; some of the 'traditional chiefs' identified by the British Colonial Service in parts of East and West Africa were actually no such thing; and the monarchies created in the Middle East were completely parvenu when compared to such authentic royal dynasties as the kings of Morocco. Orders of knighthood, the whole paraphernalia of the imperial monarchy and the imperial spectacles that were generated along with it – these were all attempts to give the impression that something very new was in fact something very old. From this perspective, the British Empire of Disraeli, Curzon, Milner, Lugard and Churchill was, like the earlier empire of Pitt, Dundas and Wellesley, built around innovation disguised as antiquity.[52]

But this was not the only way in which an empire, ostensibly dedicated to supporting the established order and denying disruptive change, was in fact the agent of great transformations that in the long run would help bring about the subversion and termination of the whole imperial enterprise. For while British officialdom generally rejected the Dalhousie–Bentinck–Palmerston–Chamberlain–Bevin view that their overseas rule should bring with it improvement and reform, modernization and progress, the reality of empire was that

improvement was inevitable, reform was unavoidable, modernization was inexorable, and progress was irreversible – the law of unintended consequences operating on an epic scale. From railways to steamships, from telegraphs to aeroplanes, from Gatling guns to dreadnoughts, from dams to bridges, from gold mines to stock exchanges, the British Empire was held together functionally, and driven forward economically, by the most advanced technologies available; and in this version and vision of empire, there was little space (or scope) for the *faux* anachronistic paraphernalia of old–new hierarchies, chivalric sovereigns and glittering ceremonies.[53]

These technological transformations were intrinsically significant as the agents and avatars of imperial modernity rather than of imperial conservatism; they were, in addition, the harbingers of social developments and political changes, as the provision of irrigation, sanitation, epidemiology, mass primary education in the vernacular and university education in English reached India after 1857, and the rest of the colonies thereafter. For the effect of these improvements was not merely to enhance the material conditions of life for many on the periphery of empire in terms of health and schooling, and thus of life-expectancy in more senses than one; it was also to accelerate the creation, and increase the number, of those urban-based, university-educated, middle-class nationalists, whom the British so disliked, and whose anti-colonial agitations, mounted in the name of democracy, freedom and collective action, would eventually bring the empire to an end and replace its unified and interconnected hierarchies with separate, sovereign nations based on very different principles of political organization and social association.[54]

11

Dissolution

On 7 December 1936, at the height of the Abdication crisis, Virginia Woolf confided to her diary that it looked as though Edward VIII, 'this one little insignificant man had moved a pebble which dislodges an avalanche'. 'Things,' she went on, by which she meant 'empires, hierarchies, moralities', in short everything that Bloomsbury detested, would 'never be the same again'.[1] In retrospect, this may seem a misleadingly apocalyptic prediction, which ignored the conservative culture of the dominions; which disregarded ruling princes, native chiefs, traditional societies and indirect rule; and which failed to appreciate the allure of titles and baubles, honours and coats of arms, sovereigns and emperors. It also underestimated the monarchy's (and the empire's) powers of resistance and recovery, as instanced by George VI and his queen during the Second World War, by the determination of successive governments to keep Britain an imperial power in the ten years after 1945, and by the sensational success of the coronation of Elizabeth II and her subsequent world tour. Yet a longer perspective suggests that while Woolf was wrong in the timing of her remarks, she was emphatically right in their substance. For within a generation her predictions were borne out, as the British empire and the British hierarchy (and British morality too: remember the Profumo scandal of 1963?) were transformed and eroded beyond recognition.[2]

The end of empire has been written about many times as both a local and a global phenomenon: but except (and instructively) in the case of the American colonies, it has rarely been treated in a sustained and systematic way as witnessing, embodying, portending and meaning the end of hierarchy. Yet since this 'one vast interconnected world' had

been constructed and envisaged on the basis of hierarchical homogeneity and social subordination, it should scarcely come as any surprise that it was eventually undermined by the politics of nationalism and the ideology of equality.[3] For when it happened, the achievement of autonomy and independence meant the rejection of Britain's empire *and* the rejection of Britain's transoceanically extended social order: locally, in the sense that domestic social structures were changed, modified, sometimes overturned; and globally, in that the imperial connection, imperial honours and the imperial monarchy were all repudiated. In most countries, sometimes rapidly, sometimes more slowly, independence was thus simultaneously a political and social revolution, as empire and hierarchy, indeed as empire *as* hierarchy, were rejected. In the era of decolonization, these themes played themselves out again and again: the way the empire faltered and fell thus tells us much, by way of retrospective commentary and corroboration, about the way it had flourished and functioned.

In one part of the empire these changes were already well under way when Virginia Woolf penned her lines. For the beginnings of the end of the British Empire as a unified, hierarchical realm took place close to home rather than at the ends of the earth: in inter-war Ireland, where, prototypically as it turned out, political and social revolution went hand in hand. One sign of this was that the British abandoned their high-status collaborators to their fate at the hands of nationalist agitators between 1918 and 1922. Notwithstanding the assurances the southern grandees and gentry had earlier been given, there were almost no safeguards provided for them in the legislation that set up the Irish Free State in 1922. As befitted a lifelong opponent of aristocracy, Lloyd George cheerfully sold the Irish landowners down the river, the first of many 'betrayals' of traditional elites that litter the history of the end of empire. Their estates were bought up by the peasantry under the provisions of the earlier Land Purchase Acts; their houses were burned to the ground by nationalist agitators; and many of them fled the country, defeated and dispossessed. And while the upper house of the new Irish parliament included some specific provisions for members of the former Ascendancy, its powers were limited, and no one took any notice of its debates.[4]

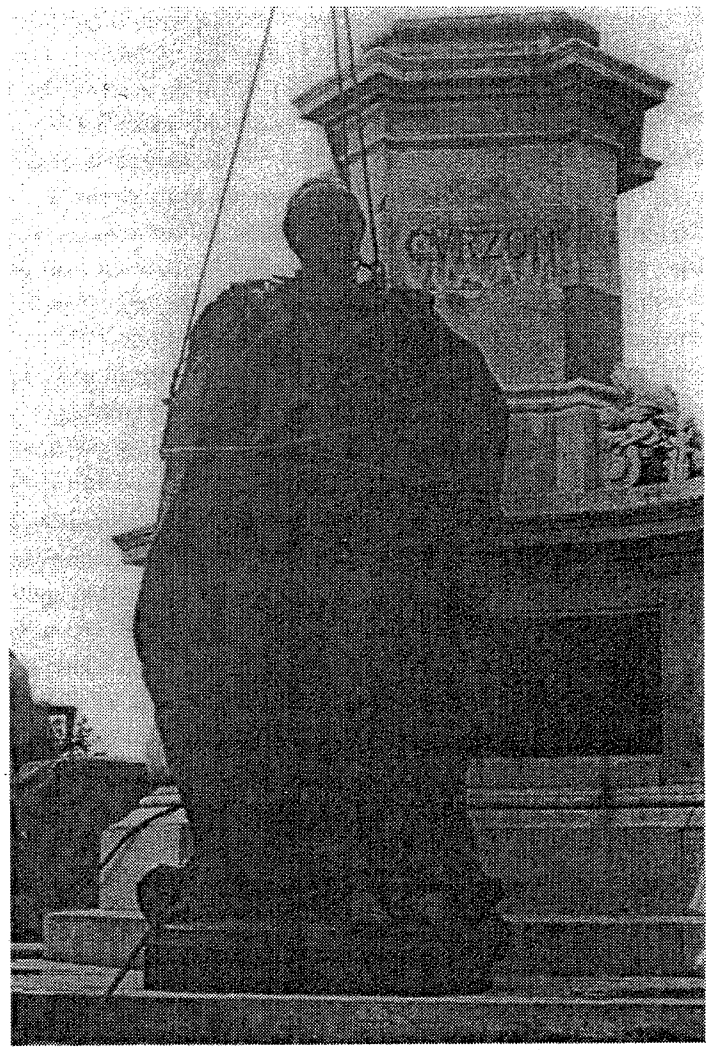
But this dismantling of aristocracy was not the only way in which the social hierarchy of southern Ireland was deliberately done away with. For it was also 'sceptres and thrones' that 'came tumbling down', as the royal-cum-ceremonial cynosure at Dublin Castle, which had provided the exemplary viceregal regime for the whole of the British Empire, was dismantled in its entirety. Already by the late nineteenth century Irish nationalists had largely ceased to attend social functions at the Castle, and these plumed parades of hierarchy were indefinitely suspended during the First World War. By then, indeed, the once-pre-eminent proconsular position of Irish viceroy had become little more than a 'transient and embarrassed phantom', surrounded by the 'outworn dignities of office'. When Viscount Fitzalan departed as the last lord-lieutenant in 1922, he left in a private car, and he was replaced by a low-key functionary as governor-general. Dublin Castle was closed down, there were no more state entries, levees or presentations, and no further non-royal appointments were made to the Order of St Patrick, which thus became the first British order of chivalry to go into desuetude, as the empire for which it was designed, the elite whom it was intended to recognize, and the social hierarchy it was supposed to legitimate all disappeared.[5]

With the advent to power of Eamon de Valera in 1932, these trends towards a democratic polity, egalitarian society and independent nation intensified, as the last, lingering vestiges of imperial hierarchy and control were one by one removed. The British government was asked to recall its governor-general; he was replaced by 'a nonentity who lived in a suburban house' and 'undertook no public duties'; and even that job was formally abolished in 1937, when the post was replaced by a president. This was a deliberate repudiation of royalty and of empire, and it had been made possible because at the time of the abdication of Edward VIII, de Valera (in inadvertent but coincidental corroboration of Virginia Woolf's prediction) took the occasion to remove any reference to the crown from the domestic affairs of the Irish nation. After the Second World War, the Irish Free State formally severed any remaining ties with Britain, and in April 1949 it became a sovereign, independent republic.[6] As with the revolt of the American colonists, this was a complete repudiation of the British Empire, for as

James Morris rightly noted, 'an Ireland run from Dublin' was 'an affront to the hierarchy of Empire'.[7]

But this disavowal was not only intrinsically important: for all these anti-hierarchical rejections, except the very last, would be replicated around the world as and when the rest of the empire was closed down and wound up. The next such episode, namely the independence of India in 1947, provides the textbook example. In negotiating an acceptable settlement, Mountbatten's overriding priority as the last viceroy was to reach accommodation with Nehru, Jinnah and Gandhi, the leaders of mass, organized nationalist opinion. Only very late in the day did he interest himself in what he saw as the lesser problem of the 'feudal relics' of the ruling princes and their states.[8] The result was that independence was a triumph for the middle-class, urban-based radicals the Raj had so detested, and it dealt many mortal blows to the British Empire as a traditional, hierarchical organism. At the midnight hour, the British monarch's imperial title disappeared; the matchless splendours of the viceroyalty, in New Delhi, and at Simla, vanished; the Indian orders of chivalry were no longer awarded to princes or proconsuls; and the whole ceremonial carapace of durbars and state elephants and loyal toasts and Empire Day was swept away. So too were the statues of the viceroys, queen–empress and king–emperors, which were removed from the open spaces and great intersections of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and New Delhi (as they had already been in Dublin), exiled to unfrequented enclaves or the back quarters of museums. And streets called Kingsway or Queensway, or commemorating proconsular worthies and heroes, were suitably renamed.[9]

At the same time the rulers of the native states – who had, once again, been both loyal and generous during the Second World War – were forced by Mountbatten to accede to India or Pakistan, as the British abruptly withdrew their protection from their once-prized allies on the rather spurious grounds that 'paramountcy could not be transferred'. Within two years of independence, they lost their freedom and their independence, and eventually, in 1971, their revenues and their titles, in this brave new world of post-imperial egalitarianism. Many old hands in the Indian Political Service, which had provided the residents for the princely states, thought their friends had been



32. Removal of statue of Lord Curzon from Calcutta after Indian independence.

betrayed, by Britain's cynical repudiation of 'inviolate and inviolable' treaties, and by Mountbatten's Lloyd George-like unconcern for their fate. 'It was,' Philip Mason recalls, 'distasteful in the extreme that the British should behave to these people with such contempt for past obligations, and such callous disregard for the decencies of diplomacy.'[10] Spurned by their old allies, rejected by their new leaders and 'consigned to the dustbin of history', many princes behaved as the Irish aristocracy, placed in a similar unenviable position, had done a generation before, disappearing into private life, managing what remained of their lands or going into business.

It is easy to see why they did so. For the whole ethos of Nehru's post-independence government was 'rampantly republican' and 'democratic and egalitarian', and thus hostile to what he regarded as the unacceptably conservative remnants of the Raj: to a hierarchical ordering of society, to the ruling princes and the British monarchy, and to everything about the 'traditional' or 'timeless' India that the British had favoured and supported.[11] And so, having marginalized and discredited the nawabs and the maharajas, Nehru turned his attention to the crown. In 1949, despite the British government's best efforts to the contrary, India definitively rejected the British-cum-imperial monarchy and proclaimed itself a republic within the Commonwealth. It was, Nehru insisted, 'quite impossible' to preserve any vestige of monarchical presence in the Indian constitution, because it would provoke so much 'division and controversy'. This was a doubly portentous decision. It ushered in a wholly new (and post-imperial) ordering and perception of Indian society and politics, stressing progress, modernity and equality. And it paved the way for the overwhelmingly multiracial and *republican* membership of the Commonwealth over the next twenty years. This change of name was indicative of a significant change in substance. 'The British Empire' had been a royal realm. 'The Commonwealth' (the prefix 'British' was removed in 1948) would soon be an association of republics.[12]

For all the euphoria of her coronation in 1953, the independence of Ireland and of India and their espousal of republican government inevitably meant that Queen Elizabeth's was in many ways the first post-imperial crowning – a change in circumstance (and in pomp) well

caught by Sir William Walton in the titles and the tone of his two coronation marches: 'Crown Imperial' for George VI had been Elgarian *nobilmente*, redolent of chivalry, history and tradition; but 'Orb and Sceptre' for Elizabeth II verged on the jauntily irreverent, with raspberries and banana-skins deftly inserted. This, in turn, was indicative of deeper changes. For the new Royal Titles Act, which had been passed earlier in coronation year, recognized that Elizabeth was no longer empress of India and ruler of the British dominions beyond the seas. Instead, she was merely 'head of the Commonwealth', the symbol of the 'free association' of fully independent member nations.[13] In the republican regimes that would soon become the majority, she would have no constitutional standing or social pre-eminence; and even in those former colonies of which she remained head of state, she was now separately queen of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and so on. Instead of being, as her forebears had been, a unitary imperial monarch, Elizabeth was simply the symbol of association, and the wearer of a crown that was shared around between different, separate sovereign states.[14] The divisible monarchy, implicit in the empire since the 1920s, had finally arrived.

From Victoria to George VI, the revived and reinvented British monarchy had been essential in giving the British imperial hierarchy its unity, coherence and legitimacy. Now all that was going, and right-wing Tories like Enoch Powell, the self-appointed defenders of the traditional empire, were much put out. But their rearguard action in parliament had been to no avail and, as they feared, this new doctrine of the divisible crown was the prelude to further moves in the former dominions (another term, along with the '*British* Commonwealth', that had lapsed in 1948) towards disassociation and diversity.[15] For since the 'British' queen was also the separate sovereign in those realms of which she remained head of state, there were growing demands that she should be represented by a native-born governor-general, rather than an exported British aristocrat or British royal. This change had already been portended in Australia in 1931 (Isaacs) and had taken place irreversibly in South Africa in 1937 (Duncan), and after the Second World War the rest of the former dominions followed suit: Canada in 1952, Australia in 1965 and New Zealand in 1967.[16]

Inevitably, these post-imperial regimes were less British and less grand than their predecessors – shorn of viceregal pretensions, devoid of aristocratic lineage or royal family connection, they no longer completed or legitimated a mimetic social-cum-imperial hierarchy subordinated to Britain. Instead of stressing ordered deference, rural values, courtly exclusiveness and white superiority, they increasingly came to stand for national autonomy, open access, social equality, economic modernity, ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.[17]

These changes in India and the old dominions were paralleled by developments in the colonial empire and the former League of Nations Mandates. For imperial government through the 'timeless' tribes and 'traditional' hierarchies of Africa and the Middle East did not long survive the Second World War. Indirect rule had already been widely criticized in the 1930s, and the entry of the United States into the conflict, lead by a president strongly aware of his nation's proud anti-colonial heritage, and unafraid of putting this point of view to the beleaguered British prime minister, only reinforced these concerns. 'It is absurd,' noted Sir Arthur Dawe, assistant under-secretary at the Colonial Office, 'to erect what is an ephemeral expedient into a sacrosanct principle.' 'Things,' he went on, 'are moving so fast in Africa that the doctrinaire adherents of the indirect rule principle may find themselves outmoded much quicker than anyone would have thought possible a few years ago.'[18] So, indeed, they did. For in a fundamental act of imperial reappraisal, the colonial secretary, Malcolm Macdonald, asked Lord Hailey, formerly governor of the Punjab and the United Provinces, to undertake a wartime survey of Britain's African colonies, and in so doing to answer the by-now inescapable question: where was indirect rule going? Hailey's answer, though carefully hedged about with qualifications as befitted a champion of the Indian princes, was, essentially, nowhere: it was too static, too conservative and of no relevance to educated Africans or their future.[19]

And so in Africa, as they had previously done in Ireland and in India, the British withdrew their support from the traditional hierarchies and tried to 'democratize the Empire' – by dismantling indirect rule and setting up representative local government, and by shifting their attention from the rural chiefs to the city-dwelling bourgeoisie to whom they hoped to hand over power.[20] This turnabout is vividly illustrated in the case of Ghana. Among the urban middle class, with whom the British began to negotiate in the late 1940s, it seemed that Dr Joseph Danquah would be the first African to head the government of the Gold Coast. He was a member of chiefly family, and his half-brother Nana Sir Ofori Atta had been a paramount Ashanti chief (CBE 1918, KBE 1927). Then in the early 1950s Kwame Nkrumah, a Marxist revolutionary, became the effective leader of the nationalists, and the British (especially the governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke) transferred their attention and allegiance to him. But the up-country Ashanti chiefs had no wish to support independence if it meant having their power taken away by the urban radicals of Accra: they, however, were abandoned to their fate. As Brian Lapping concludes, London 'gave independence to the modern, popular party over the protests of the traditional chiefs whom British rule had formerly encouraged'.[21] It was the same in Nigeria, where the British corralled the emirs and sheikhs of the north into a federation that would be dominated by the Lagos-based south; and in Uganda, where the kabaka of Buganda was deported from 1953 to 1955 so as to make possible the integration of his kingdom with the rest of the country, and to encourage the growth of an authentic Ugandan national identity.[22]

In Africa, as previously in India and southern Ireland, independence was thus not just the end of imperial control: it was also the end of the ornamental proconsular regimes that had been the means and expression of that control, and of the domestic social hierarchies in collaboration with which that control had been exercised. Like the Indian Empire, the colonial empire had existed as a pageant, and so it was entirely appropriate that it expired in a succession of valedictory spectacles. At independence ceremonials around the globe, modelled on those first devised by Mountbatten in 1947, the British flag was hauled down for the last time in the presence of a member of the royal family, witnessing the end of empire, hierarchy and monarchy.[23] In all these new countries, as previously in India, proconsular splendour, resident advisers, plumed hats, ribbons and orders, royal statues and Empire Day very soon disappeared, to be replaced by middle-class

33. The end of empire, Nairobi, 1963.

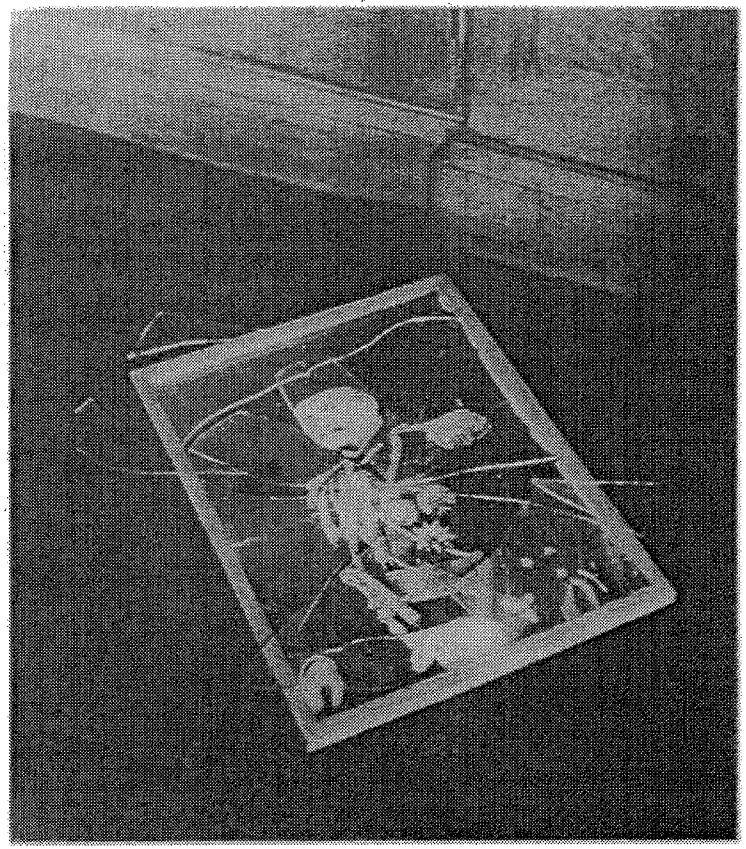
leaders of western-style political parties. Most of these new nation states joined the Commonwealth and, in so doing, *further* transformed it. Following the precedent set by India, they became republics, thereby proclaiming their commitment to modernity and equality, and their rejection of hierarchy and tradition.

In many of these new nations, this rejection was as complete as it had been in Ireland and in India. In Uganda, the by-now-returned Kabaka Mutesa II of Buganda had been given the KBE in 1962 (just as his father had been in 1937), and he became the first president of the newly independent nation in the following year. But in 1966 he was unceremoniously bundled out by an unholy alliance of Milton Obote and General Amin, and he died in exile in London three years later. In Zanzibar, which became independent in December 1963, the sultan whose father had been congratulated by King George VI for his dynasty's endurance was overthrown within a month by an African-organized coup, and by 1964 the new regime had negotiated a full union with Nyerere's Tanganyika.[24] And in Malta there was a similar revolution, albeit by more peaceful means. After Lord Strickland's death in 1940, the political mantle descended to his redoubtable daughter, Mabel. But her passionate pro-British views found little support on the island in the era of decolonization and independence, and power passed to Dom Mintoff, the Labour leader, who steered Malta to independence in 1964 and republican status ten years later. By the time she died in 1988, the Stricklands had ceased to be a power in the land, and Mabel had outlived the aristocratic, Anglo-Maltese world into which she had been born.[25]

It was almost the same in the Middle East, where the alliances between the British and the monarchies they had created or cultivated broke down, as 'the people' finally triumphed over 'the pashas', and the nationalists over the empire.[26] But it was not quite the same: for within this recognizable framework of imperial withdrawal and domestic transformation, there were significant local variations. In Ireland, India and much of Africa, the British had understood the way the winds of change were blowing and had largely abandoned the notables, the princes and the chiefs to their fate: they transferred their attention and their allegiance to the middle-class nationalists, to whose

leaders they eventually (and with evident relief) transferred power. In Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, the same winds were blowing, and with even greater ferocity, but the British were powerless to adapt to them. They were too closely identified with the princes and the pashas to forge links with the new generation of nationalist leaders, who increasingly looked to Moscow for ideology and inspiration. This failure to win over the middle and working classes meant the British had no choice but to continue supporting the 'old regimes', even though they saw that they were now 'the wrong kind of people', and that in the era of decolonization this was the wrong kind of policy. For as Ernest Bevin had recognized, the princes and the pashas 'would not stand up to revolutionary conditions, and would be swept away'.[27]

Soon after he left the Foreign Office, Bevin's predictions were amply (and violently) vindicated, as the old regimes buckled before the full onslaught of Arab nationalism, and their imperial partners were repudiated. In Egypt, King Farouk was forced by popular protest to dismiss his prime minister Nahas Pasha, and was himself deposed in a military coup in 1952. This was led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was determined to rid the country of its antiquated social structure and also of British domination, and the greater Arab world of those he regarded as imperialist stooges. Within four years he had achieved most of these objectives: he exiled the king to Italy, rid his country of British troops, created a republic and nationalized the Suez Canal.[28] In Jordan, King Abdullah was assassinated in 1951, and his son, Talal, reigned for barely a year, being generally regarded as mentally unbalanced and unfit for the succession. Abdullah's grandson, the young King Hussein, found it difficult to keep his throne, and he was able to appease nationalist agitations only by distancing himself from empire, by forging closer links with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and by dismissing the British officers of the Arab Legion in 1956, including Sir John Glubb, who had been commander since 1939. And in Iraq there was a 'pro-Nasser, anti-western coup' in July 1958, led by Abd al-Karim Quasim, which saw the brutal murder of the young King Faisal II, the former regent Abdulillah and Nuri Pasha, and the institution of a republic that swept away 'an entrenched aristocracy' and the existing social order.[29]



34. A smashed picture of King Farouk lying on an Egyptian pavement.

Only a decade after it seemed that Britain's imperial position in the Middle East was of greater amplitude than ever before, the Bedouin romance had collapsed in the face of rampant pan-Arab nationalism and widespread Soviet infiltration. Thereafter, the last British bastions in the region, dependent on the collaboration of the sheikhs, soon fell. In Aden, the South Asian solution of backing the ruling princes against the urban nationalists was no more successful than it had been in the nation of its inception. Faced with the incorrigible hostility of the Egypt- and Yemen-backed National Liberation Front, the British abandoned their previous support for the sheikhs and the sultans and, having failed to negotiate an independence deal with the nationalists, ignominiously withdrew in the 'worst shambles of the end of Empire', leaving their stores behind, in 1967. Thereupon a People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen, a Marxist Soviet satellite, was established.[30] And between 1961 and 1971, beginning with Kuwait and ending with Bahrain and Qatar, Britain repudiated its remaining alliances in the Gulf, and withdrew its residents and its regiments from the sheikhdoms. Nowhere in the Middle East was there the last, dignified retreat of independence ceremonials, and for all the supposed kinship between British mandarins and Bedouin chiefs, none of these independent Arab countries subsequently joined the Commonwealth.[31]

Accordingly, and within scarcely a generation, the whole hierarchical embrace of empire – Virginia Woolf's 'things' – had been rapidly dismantled. The coherent and ordered vision of transoceanic dominion that the British and their collaborators had sought to sustain and project had vanished into thin air with extraordinary speed. In 1903 Curzon had banned the singing of the hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' from his great durbar, because it contained the words 'Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane' – a subversive line for a believer in imperial hierarchy and imperial permanence.[32] Seventy years on, that was just what had happened. The British Empire had been about subordination and homogeneity, replication and analogy; the Commonwealth was about equality and diversity, repudiation and autonomy: there was, then, much more than simply a change of name being recognized when, in 1958, Empire Day became Commonwealth

Day. For, notwithstanding many pious and platitudinous observations to the contrary, the 'post-Britannic', 'de-Britannicized' Commonwealth was not the fulfilment, but the antithesis (indeed, negation) of empire – a voluntary organization run by a secretary-general and pledged to promote equality, rather than a mandatory organization presided over by king–emperor and pledged to uphold hierarchy.[33]

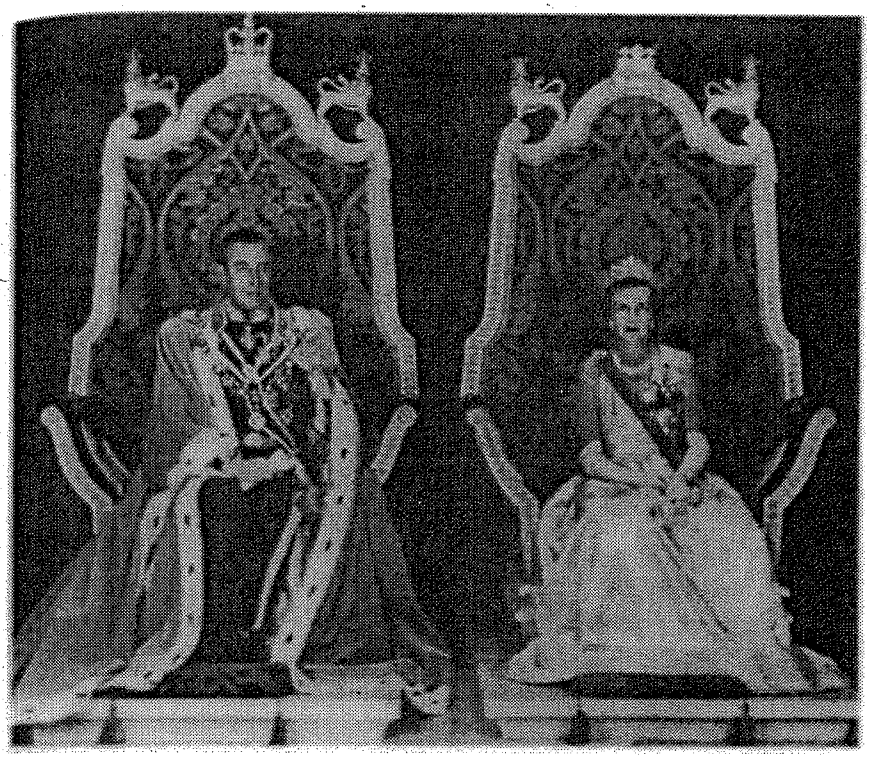
This transformation was also reflected in the further downsizing, dismantling and discrediting of the system of imperial honours, more gradually than in Ireland or in India, but cumulatively with similar results. As long as a limited number of proconsular postings remained, from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s, there were still some figures in the traditional Lansdowne–Curzon–Willingdon mode, festooned with titles and laden with orders: Lords Mountbatten (viceroy of India), Alexander (governor-general of Canada) and Slim (governor-general of Australia).[34] Even in the 1960s there were still some former Indian princes holding the GCSI and the GCIE, such as the nizam of Hyderabad, the maharaja of Mysore and the nawab of Rampur (as well as the sultan of Muscat and Oman). But they were increasingly viewed as imperial-cum-Ruritanian relics, and since the late 1960s few Britons have been decorated for services to their empire. Today there are no proconsuls or residents to be given the Order of St Michael and St George, which is now bestowed almost exclusively on ambassadors, diplomats and members of the Foreign Office. No appointments have been made to the Imperial Service Order since 1993, and many people now feel that the continued use of an order of chivalry named after the British Empire is absurd – partly because the empire has long since gone, and partly because so few of these honours are now awarded to people who live overseas.[35]

These honorific changes in Britain have been paralleled by (and in part driven by) changes in attitudes and practices in the former dominions in the years since 1945. Instead of being sought after by those who wanted incorporation in, and recognition by, the empire, imperial honours were increasingly seen as intrusive and outdated emblems of British condescension and colonial subordination. Very few hereditary peerages were given out to those in the empire during and after the Second World War (Bennett of Canada, Bruce of

Australia, Freyberg of New Zealand, Huggins of Rhodesia and Thomson of Canada), and the life peerages for Lords Casey (Australia) and Elworthy (New Zealand) were the first and the last of their kind. Australia formally abolished titles in 1983, and even in New Zealand, once the most conservative of the former dominions, they were repudiated in 2000.[36] The other side of this is that since the 1960s the former dominions have given out their own honours: the Order of Canada since 1967, the Order of Australia since 1975 and the New Zealand Order of Merit since 1996.[37] True to their nations' by now much vaunted egalitarian traditions, they do not carry with them any title, nor do they command that much prestige. And this policy of imperial repudiation and domestic reinvention has also been followed in the former British colonies in Africa and Asia.

This dismantled honorific hierarchy has been accompanied by the transformation, and the weakening, of the position of the British-cum-imperial monarchy. For however seriously Queen Elizabeth II takes her role as head of the Commonwealth, the House of Windsor inevitably counts for less overseas than it did in the heyday of empire. One sign of this has been the disappearance of royal proconsuls, those exported Disraelian icons of hierarchy and monarchy. To be sure, Lord Mountbatten was the king–emperor's cousin: but he was sent to India in 1947 to close the Raj down rather than to keep it going. He did so rapidly, ruthlessly, and unsentimentally, backing (unlike Lord Lytton) the people against the princes. Thereafter, as the old dominions opted for native-born governors-general, these plumage positions in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa ceased to be available to British royals – even to Prince Charles. At a lower level of proconsular grandeur, the last quasi-royal imperial notable was Sir Henry Abel-Smith, who was governor of Queensland from 1958 to 1966. Although himself a commoner, Abel-Smith was the husband of Lady Mary Cambridge, and thus the son-in-law of the earl of Athlone, who in an earlier era had governed Canada and South Africa. But this was the end of a dynasty, and the end of the line.

At the same time the standing and significance, resonance and meaning of royal tours to parts of what was once the empire have also markedly diminished. The head of the Commonwealth and the divisible



35. Lord and Lady Mountbatten as the last viceroy and vicereine of India, 1947.

sovereign is no longer the iconic king–emperor of old, a symbol of unity and order and subordination; and while the advent of air travel has made such visits more easy and more frequent, familiarity has also served to undermine their mystery and magic. The six-month voyages in British battleships, the transcontinental journeys in splendid trains, the massed throngs of eager and expectant crowds, the obsequious behaviour of colonial princes and premiers, the hushed and reverent tones of journalists and authors: all this has long since gone, like the royal yacht itself, and along with it the very notion that the monarch was the supreme embodiment of imperial unity and hierarchy. The queen's tours of Australia in 1963 and India in 1997 were pale shadows of the imperial progresses of 1954 or 1910, and her visits to the Commonwealth heads-of-government conferences are deliberately low-key affairs.[38] Indeed, the prime and paradoxical effect of these more frequent and less spectacular royal visits has been to draw attention in Canada, New Zealand and Australia to the anomaly of having a non-native born head of state who lives half a world away in Britain. Hence the growth of republicanism in all three countries.[39]

What conclusions may we draw from this account of the ending of empire as the ending of hierarchy? One is that, despite Trollope's observation (and prediction) to the contrary, the four former British dominions *have* increasingly come to resemble the United States – not by means of sudden political and social revolutions, replicating 1776, but rather as a result of slower, long-term evolution. Nor should this occasion any surprise: for as 'new' nations, they bore a certain resemblance to America from the outset; and as the United Kingdom has waned as world force, while the United States has waxed, those resemblances were bound to grow and deepen. Like America, the former dominions are large countries, with dense populations in some areas, but also with vast tracts of open space and abundant natural resources. They also contain substantial indigenous populations and, following the civil rights legislation in the United States, they have all outlawed discrimination on the grounds of race or colour – Canada in 1962, Australia in 1973, New Zealand in 1987 and South Africa with the collapse of apartheid in 1990.[40] Today these countries see

themselves (in some senses realistically, in others mythologically) as dynamic, egalitarian, democratic, multicultural and anti-hierarchical societies, following the American rather than the British model. The period in their past when they were the setting for the export and replication of the metropolitan social order may have lasted longer than domestic critics wanted, and than historians have generally allowed. But it is now definitely over.[41]

While the former dominions have freed up their once imperial polities and relaxed their once hierarchical societies in the direction of the United States, the former colonies and mandates have followed the rather different precedents set by Ireland and India. This, again, is unsurprising. On the contrary, it is both logical and chronological. Unlike America and the dominions, the colonies and mandates were not societies settled and created by the British, but merely occupied by them, and governed through 'traditional' social structures and elites. Accordingly, the repudiation of the imperial connection and the overthrow of 'traditional' hierarchies went hand in hand. In some former colonies and mandates this process was as thorough as in Ireland. Burma, the Sudan, Egypt, Iraq and the Yemen completely repudiated Britain, empire and hierarchy, establishing peoples' republics that rejected the idea of Commonwealth membership. But Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda preferred the milder Indian variant of independence and social revolution, while remaining in the Commonwealth and recognizing the queen as its head.[42]

As imperial links were severed, and as social hierarchies were undermined, there were many people in the former empire who, with ample justification, felt abandoned and betrayed. In its heyday the empire had depended on collaboration between the British and the social elites in the dominions, in India, in the colonies and in the mandates – a lengthy and mutually beneficial encounter that had been based more on class than on colour. And in this regard, the imperial ending was all of a piece with the imperial existence. For as the empire was dismantled, British policy-makers understood, with a ruthless lack of sentiment, that they must now do business with those nationalist leaders who generally came from lower down the social scale – and this less-enduring collaboration was, once again, more concerned with

rank than with race.[43] But this repudiation of their traditional allies atop local hierarchies left many former notables adrift and alone: the old ascendancies in Ireland, Melbourne and Toronto; the gentry settlers in the White Highlands of Kenya; the nawabs and maharajas in India; and the sultans, emirs and chiefs in Africa and the Middle East. 'English gentlemen, Indian Princes, African Knights of the British Empire': whatever the colour of their skin, many of them felt aggrieved, disappointed, let down. In this, as in so much of the empire story, the 'really important category' was not race: it was status.[44]

It was not only English gentlemen (of whatever colour) out there in what had once been the empire who were thus affected and diminished by its ending. As John Darwin has rightly remarked, the United Kingdom was no less 'a successor state of the old imperial system', and it has also been obliged to make adjustments.[45] For as the imperial hierarchy faltered and fell abroad, the domestic hierarchy, which empire had both replicated and reinforced, also began to lose credibility and conviction. That, at least, was the argument advanced by the young Peregrine Worsthorne in the immediate aftermath of the Suez fiasco of 1956. 'What,' he wanted to know, 'is the point of maintaining a Queen Empress without an Empire to rule over?' 'Everything,' he concluded, 'about the British class system begins to look foolish and tacky when related to a second-class power on the decline.' These views were echoed and amplified in the attacks on the class-bound nature of the monarchy that were launched at the same time by Lord Altrincham and Malcolm Muggeridge, and they were amply borne out by subsequent events. For as the empire waned in the 1960s, and as the whole culture of ornamentalism fell victim to satire and scepticism and scorn, Britain *did* become (as Virginia Woolf had foreseen) a less hierarchical, less 'moral' and more open society, a trend that has intensified in the 1980s and 1990s. This 'decline of deference' and lessened respect for established institutions has undoubtedly been the most significant domestic consequence of the loss of empire – though it is a large and complex subject that still awaits its historian.[46]

But some of the outlines are already clear. One indication of this, as conspicuous in the former metropolis as on the former periphery, has been the deliberate diminution of the high Victorian, Disraelian

monarchy, as the whole paraphernalia of ostentatious living – royal yachts, royal trains, royal tax exemptions, royal ceremonials – have been cut down and scaled back, so as to create a reduced, post-imperial crown in better alignment with the diminished, post-imperial power that Britain has become during the present queen's reign.[47] Another has been the virtual disappearance by the aristocracy from the corridors of power. The Conservative governments of 1951 to 1964 were themselves unprecedentedly unaristocratic; but they still had their share of grandees and gentry, like the marquess of Salisbury, who wished to maintain and govern the empire. They wished in vain. The late 1950s and the early 1960s witnessed both the end of the British Empire, and the end of the British aristocracy's claims to be the national and imperial ruling class by hereditary right. The fact that these developments occurred simultaneously was not accidental.[48] Today, Britain is a less hierarchical nation and society than it was in the days when it was the imperial metropolis, just as the former dominions are less hierarchical nations and societies than they were in the days when they were a prime part of the imperial periphery. Once again, these simultaneous trends are not mere coincidence. In its ending, as in its making and in its heyday, the history of the empire and the history of Britain are inseparable.

12

Epilogue

All this is rightly written of in the past tense: for it describes the hierarchical-cum-imperial world – 'an entire interactive system' – we have lost.[1] Or does it? And have we? To both questions, the answer must be: yes, but not entirely. Things change; but survivors survive and residues endure. To be sure, the 'vast interconnected world' that flourished between the 1850s and 1950s, and reached its zenith between Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897 and George V's Silver Jubilee of 1935, has gone – an historical revolution aptly recognized by Robin Cook's reported decision, on becoming foreign secretary in May 1997, to remove the pictures *both* of British proconsuls *and* Indian ruling princes from his office.[2] But in what was once the British Empire, in the metropolis and on the periphery, traces of hierarchy linger, as structure and sentiment, and as institutions and ideology, and they sometimes do so in the most surprising and unexpected of places.[3] In South Asia, and notwithstanding their treatment at the hands of the Raj and the Congress Party, the former ruling princes of India have retained some of their wealth and status, and some of them remain involved in the country's public life, as diplomats, governors, cabinet ministers or elected representatives; and the president of India is surrounded by many of the ceremonial trappings originally invented for the British viceroy.[4]

Near by, in Malaya, the ruling sultans did even better, surviving the invasion and occupation of the Japanese, the unprecedented disruption from Communist insurgents, and the deliberate attempt of the British to renounce their historic treaty obligations and to withdraw its support for them: in short, to abandon them as they had earlier abandoned

the ruling princes of India. Accordingly, between 1945 and 1948 the Colonial Office attempted to create a Malayan Union, in which the power and position of the sultans would be much curtailed, and Britain would transfer its support to other groups in society. But, unlike India, there was no indigenous demand for a reduction in the authority of the native rulers, and such was the level of protest from both the sultans and their subjects that – as in the 1930s – the emasculation scheme was abandoned. Thereafter, by judicious collaboration with the emerging nationalists, the rulers maintained their authority, and independence negotiations proceeded smoothly (and unusually), without nationalist agitation and with the sultans still in charge.[5] As a result, when independence came in 1957 the 'safeguarding of the position and prestige of Their Highnesses as Constitutional Rulers of their Respective States' was an essential element in the new constitution; the rulers agreed to elect one of their number on a system of rotation to act as king of the new nation for five-year periods. Far from being, as the British had hoped (and note the use of analogy again), somewhere 'between an eighteenth-century Bishop and an hereditary Lord Lieutenant', they have maintained their powers, virtually unimpaired, until very recently.[6]

As these very different examples of India and Malaya serve to show, independence from Britain might encourage the ending of social hierarchy and princely dominion, or it might witness its preservation. Between these extremes, a picture emerges in some parts of the former empire of the limited survival of traditional social hierarchies and social perceptions. The monarchies that the British created or protected in Brunei, Jordan, Buganda, Tonga, Lesotho, Kuwait, Oman and Swaziland still function; and chiefly prestige and tribal identities endure (or have been recovered) elsewhere in some parts of what was once British Africa, from Nigeria (where one quarter of the members of the Federal Executive Council are chiefs) to Zimbabwe (where among the Hwesa chiefly power has re-emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of the ruling party at local level).[7] Nor are these the only signs. On the queen's recent visit to Ghana, she participated in durbars to meet native Ashanti chiefs that would have gladdened the heart of Lord Lugard;

Nelson Mandela clearly draws some of his authority from his inherited position as a southern Nguni minor chief; and the previous secretary-general of the Commonwealth was Chief Emeka Anyaoku of Nigeria. Meanwhile, in Canada and New Zealand, Inuit and Maori chiefs are now accorded attention and deference, which their forebears never received in the days of empire.[8]

Even for the British, and in their former colonies of settlement, empire as hierarchy is not entirely over: there is still some overdue adjustment and belated dismantling going on – or (since there is nothing inevitable about this) not going on. In November 1999 the hereditary peerage in the British House of Lords was largely removed – a definite blow against landed aristocracy, unwritten tradition and the organic, Burkeian constitution in what had once been the imperial metropolis, and a blow that had been portended and promised in the Parliament Act passed in 1911. But for virtually the whole of the remainder of the twentieth century, nothing substantive had happened: as long as Britain remained an imperial power, the traditional, hereditary peers survived in the traditional House of Lords. But once the empire was finally seen to be irrevocably gone, the hereditary peerage soon followed: two years after the handover of Hong Kong, to be precise. This near-simultaneous termination of the last great colonial outpost overseas, and of the last great bastion of hierarchy in the metropolis, cannot be accidental. And there have also been calls for a thorough review and rationalization of the honours system which, even allowing for the demise of the Orders of St Patrick, the Star of India and the Indian Empire, and for the ending of overseas awards, remains stubbornly (and ever more implausibly) stuck in a late-Victorian and early-twentieth-century time-warp.[9]

The same argument has been made in the three former dominions of settlement that retain Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. To be sure, she is separately and divisibly the queen of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But these positions are not only intrinsically anomalous in that she lives half a world away and only pays occasional visits to these overseas realms: they are also a hangover from the old imperial monarchy rather than an expression of vibrant, independent nationhood. How long will they survive? At almost the very same time that the hereditary peers were expelled from the British House of

Lords, but with what looked like the opposite outcome, Australia voted in its referendum to retain the queen as its head of state by a majority of 55 to 45 per cent. In conformity with the view of empire as being primarily (and wholesomely) rural and agrarian, the most vociferous supporters of the monarchy came from Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, the least urbanized states, from whom there was much criticism of the 'Chardonnay republicans' living in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, the direct descendants of those middle-class city-dwellers who had never found favour in imperial circles. But while the traditionalists may have triumphed in the short run, the general feeling seemed to be a recognition that the monarchy would eventually go – and not just in Australia but elsewhere in the Commonwealth where the Queen remained head of state. If and when that is done, the vestiges of empire-as-hierarchy will largely have disappeared. But who can be certain this will happen? Or confidently predict when?[10]

Meanwhile, such attitudes and perceptions certainly survive at what was once the top of the national-cum-imperial hierarchy, in part in the person of the queen. To be sure, it is only 'in part'. She operates well as a post-imperial, low-key player at the Commonwealth heads-of-government meetings, she had acquiesced in the downsizing of the still-imperial crown that she inherited in 1952, and in her millennial tour of Australia she expressed affection for the people, but insisted that it was for them alone to decide the future of their monarchy and of their constitution. On the other hand, her grandparents and her parents *were* emperor and empress of India, she likes the traditional world of landed grandees and landed estates, and she shares her forebears' passion for medals, uniforms, decorations, investitures and ceremonial. Not surprisingly, as someone at the apex of what remains of the imperial hierarchy, she likes things ordered, and she likes things not to change.[11] As befits a person born in 1926, and who was nine at the time of King George V's Silver Jubilee, she is a child of the empire to which she pledged her life on her twenty-first birthday in South Africa in 1947. And she seems to have a particular affection for those monarchs whose forebears were sovereigns of dependent territories in

36. Queen Elizabeth II greeted by King Hussein on her 1984 visit to Jordan.

the heyday of the British Empire, such as the late King Hussein of Jordan (Hon. GCB, GCVO and the Royal Victorian Chain), or the sultan of Brunei (Hon. GCMG), or the king of Tonga (Hon. GCMG, GCVO and KBE).

Perhaps more surprisingly, it is not only in the person of the queen that these traditional views and perceptions linger, but also in the next generation in the person of Prince Charles. As the owner of Highgrove and the creator of Poundbury, he believes in the 'natural' ordering of things, be it in a regiment or on a landed estate, where everyone knows their place, and where deference and hierarchy rule.[12] And these domestic perceptions and presuppositions clearly influence him, as they did his forebears, in his views of those nations and peoples that were once part of the British Empire. He thinks that the thirteen American colonies would not have revolted if George III had undertaken a royal tour, which would have enabled the colonists to realize how decent he was. He had hoped to follow his uncle and become governor-general of Australia, and was much disappointed when he learned this was something many Australians did not want and would not welcome. And in his eulogy of King Hussein of Jordan, at a memorial service held in St Paul's Cathedral, he recognized him (as an earlier prince of Wales had recognized the king of Hawaii) as a social equal whose high rank dissolved racial differences: 'a wonderful combination of the virtues of the Bedouin Arab and, if I may say so, the English gentleman'. The British Empire may have vanished from the map, but it has not entirely vanished from the mind: in Buckingham Palace, and elsewhere too, its hierarchical sentiments, and some of its structures, still endure.[13]